

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM
APPLICATION EVALUATION RANKING TOOL—NATIONAL QUESTIONS**

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Ranking Questions	2014 Points
If the application is for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP), the agency will assign significant ranking priority and conservation benefit by answering “Yes” to the following question. Answering “Yes” to question 1a will result in the application being awarded the maximum amount of points that can be earned for the national priority category.	
1. a. Is the program application to support the development of a CAP? If answer is “Yes,” do not answer any other national level questions. If answer is “No,” proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.	250 Point(s)
Answer "Yes" if this application is for a CAP. Answer "No" if this application does not include a CAP. If the answer is "Yes," answer all other national questions "No."	
Clean and Abundant Water: Water Quality—Will the proposed project assist the producer to:	
2. a. Meet regulatory requirements relating to animal feeding operations or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?	15 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if the animal feeding operation is located in a high priority Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) watershed for ecoli (see Conservation Programs Geographic Information System Interface [CPGI]).	
2. b. Reduce sediment, nutrients, or pesticides from agricultural operations located within a field that adjoins a designated "impaired water body" (TMDL, 303d, etc.)?	15 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if the unit of concern is located in a high priority TMDL watershed for dissolved oxygen, total suspended sediments, nutrients, or pesticides (see CPGI).	
2. c. Reduce sediment, nutrients, or pesticides from agricultural operations located within a field that adjoins a "non-impaired water body"?	5 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if the unit of concern is located adjacent to a water body (lake, pond, or perennial stream as determined by the 1:24,000 scale hydrography layer).	

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Clean and Abundant Water: Water Conservation—Will the proposed project assist the producer implement conservation practices (CPs) which:	
3. a. Decrease aquifer overdraft?	15 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if the unit of concern is located within a Kansas Water Plan Priority Groundwater Decline Area (see CPGI) and the EQIP Conservation Plan of Operations (CPO) includes practices which reduce aquifer overdraft.	
3. b. Conserve water from irrigation system improvements and saved water will be available for other beneficial uses?	10 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if the application includes an irrigation system being improved with an estimated net water savings of at least five percent AND any of the following CPs <u>are included</u> in the EQIP CPO: 328, 329, 340, 345, 346, 430, 441, 442, 449, 512, and 550.	
3. c. Conserve water in an area where the applicant participates in a geographically established or watershed-wide project?	5 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if any part of the unit of concern is located within a state designated Quick Response Area and/or Intensive Groundwater Use Conservation Area.	
Clean Air: Treatment of air quality from agricultural sources—Will the proposed project assist the producer to implement practice(s) which:	
4. a. Meet on-farm regulatory requirements relating to air quality or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?	15 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if the EQIP CPO <u>includes</u> any of the following CPs: 340, 550, and 590.	
4. b. Reduce on-farm generated green house gases such as Carbon Dioxide (CO ₂), Methane (CH ₄), and Nitrous Oxide (N ₂ O)?	15 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if the EQIP CPO <u>includes</u> any of the following CPs: 340, 528, 550, and 590.	
4. c. Increase on-farm carbon sequestration?	5 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if the EQIP CPO <u>includes</u> any of the following CPs: 329, 340, 345, 346, 512, 528, and 550.	
Soil Health—Will the proposed project assist the producer to implement practice(s) which:	
5. a. Reduce erosion to tolerable limits (Soil "T")?	15 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if the EQIP CPO has CPs planned that will reduce all forms of erosion to the soil loss tolerance (T) of the predominant soil(s), on all fields in the offered area.	
5. b. Improve soil tilth, organic matter, structure, health, etc.?	5 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if the planned practices meet quality criteria for Soil Quality Degradation—Organic Matter Depletion (see organic matter matrix) OR address Soil Quality Degradation—Compaction resource concerns.	

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Healthy Plant and Animal Communities Wildlife Habitat Conservation— Will the proposed project assist the producer to implement practice(s) which:	
6. a. Benefit on-farm habitat associated with threatened and endangered (T&E) species at-risk, candidate, or species of concern as identified in a state wildlife plan?	15 Point(s)
Award points if the EQIP CPO restores or enhances habitat for federally listed T&E species at-risk, candidate, or fish and wildlife species of concern. Refer to the electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG) (http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/) for Kansas T&E and Species in Need of Conservation (SINC) and the Kansas Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan (http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us/news/Other-Services/Kansas-CWCP/Kansas-CWCP).	
6. b. Help retain wildlife and plant habitat on land exiting the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)?	10 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if the CRP contract expired and is still in permanent cover <u>OR</u> the contract will expire by September 30, 2014, and be maintained as permanent cover.	
High Quality, Productive Soils, Healthy Plant and Animal Communities— Will the proposed project assist the producer implement practices which:	
7. a. Help manage or control noxious or invasive plant species on non-cropland?	10 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if the EQIP CPO includes practices that reduce or eliminate noxious or invasive plant species (see Noxious and Invasive Species list link through eFOTG, Section II, or at: http://www.ksda.gov/plant_protection/content/349).	
7. b. Increase, or improve habitat to benefit pollinator or other targeted wildlife species?	10 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if the EQIP CPO <u>includes</u> CP 550—Range Planting that involves the establishment of pollinator habitat.	
7. c. Properly dispose of livestock carcasses?	5 Point(s)
Answer “No”	
7. d. Are identified in an Integrated Pest Management Plan?	10 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if EQIP CPO includes CP 595, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), techniques and procedures are followed.	
7. e. Are identified in a Nutrient Management Plan?	10 Point(s)
Answer "Yes" if EQIP CPO includes CP 590, Nutrient Mangement.	
7. f. Apply principles of adaptive nutrient management?	5 Point(s)
Answer "Yes" if EQIP CPO includes CP 590 and includes adaptive nutrient management techniques.	

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Energy Conservation—Will the proposed project assist the producer to implement practices which:	
8. a. Reduce energy consumption on the agricultural operation?	15 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if the EQIP CPO <u>includes</u> any of the following CPs: 329, 340, 345, 346, 441, 442, 449, 512, and 590.	
8. b. Increase on-farm energy efficiency with practices and improvements identified in an approved energy audit equivalent to criteria required in Agricultural Energy Management Plan (AgEMP) (122,124)?	10 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if an Agricultural AgEMP CAP 122 or 124 or equivalent Energy Audit has been previously completed by a Technical Service Provider (TSP) and the EQIP CPO includes at least one practice identified to increase on-farm energy efficiency.	
8. c. Assist in implementing energy conservation measures that also reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants?	10 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if the CPO <u>includes</u> any of the following CPs: 328, 340, 449, 345, 329, and 346.	
Business Lines: Conservation Implementation Additional Ranking Considerations—Will the proposed project result in:	
9. a. Implementation of all CPs scheduled in the contract on the Form CPA-1155, Conservation Plan or Schedule of Operations, within three years of date of obligation?	10 Point(s)
Answer “Yes” if the planned practices in the EQIP CPO are scheduled to be completed within three years of the obligation date.	
9. b. Improvement of existing CPs or conservation systems already in place at the time the application is accepted?	5 Point(s)
Answer “Yes”	
9. c. Implementation of practice(s) which will complete an existing conservation system or suite of practices?	5 Point(s)
Answer “Yes”	